



News Release

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Utahns Heading Outdoors Urged to Fight the Bite *Protect with DEET from Dusk Through Dawn*

(Salt Lake City, UT) – The Memorial Holiday Weekend marks the time when most Utahns begin spending more time outside. This weekend many Utahns will head to newly opened pools, campgrounds, and amusement parks and enjoy outdoor activities and barbecues. As Utahns spend more time outdoors the risk of getting mosquito bites increases, therefore increasing the risk of West Nile virus (WNV) infection.

WNV has NOT been detected in Utah. As a precaution, the Utah Department of Health (UDOH) is urging Utahns to Fight the Bite by following the prevention steps below to reduce the risk of being infected with WNV. West Nile virus is rare, but if you have symptoms including high fever, severe headache and stiff neck, contact your health care provider immediately. Though anyone can be infected and become ill, serious illness is more common in people over age 50.

Reduce your risk of West Nile virus during outdoor activity

Protect From Dusk Through Dawn

That is when mosquitoes that carry the virus are most active, so take precautions to prevent mosquito bites.

Use Repellent With DEET

- Use mosquito repellents that contain DEET (N, N-diethyl-m-toluamide) when doing any outdoor activity. (Follow the label instructions carefully).
- For adults, use repellents containing DEET at 30–35% concentration. For children 2–12, use repellents containing 10% or less DEET. Do not use on children under the age of 2.

Take Cover

Wear protective clothing like long-sleeved shirts and long pants while outdoors.

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Reduce areas on your property where water collects & mosquitoes breed

Repair and Clean

Make sure screen doors and window screens are in good condition. Use mosquito netting when sleeping outdoors or in an unscreened structure and to protect small babies any time. Clean out leaf-clogged gutters and repair leaky faucets and sprinklers.

Remove Standing Water

Eliminate standing water sources around housing areas (i.e., water in old tires, cans, birdbaths, poorly kept swimming pools, etc.).

Cut Grass and Weeds

Keep weeds and tall grass cut short; adult mosquitoes look for these shady places to rest during the hot daylight hours.

As people enjoy the outdoors, the UDOH is also urging Utahns to watch for dead birds. The virus spreads from bird-to-bird by mosquitoes. Many birds can become infected with the virus and not become sick; other birds, especially crows, ravens, magpies and jays, often die when they become infected with the virus. Ravens and crows are black and large – crows are at least 15-18 inches long and ravens are even larger. Magpies are mostly black and white and they have long sweeping tails. (Magpies may have some iridescent blue and green ‘overtones’ as well.) The jays most commonly found in Utah are blue to bluish gray and about 11-12 inches long. Other birds that may die when infected with West Nile virus are the raptors, otherwise known as birds of prey. These include hawks, eagles, and falcons.

Please report sightings of dead birds to your local mosquito abatement district, your local health department, the Utah Department of Health’s Office of Epidemiology, or the Utah Department of Natural Resources. Never touch a dead bird or animal with bare or unprotected hands. Some of the birds may be collected and tested for West Nile virus. The testing will allow the UDOH to identify areas in Utah where West Nile virus might exist.

For more information, visit www.health.utah.gov/wnv

Fight the Bite, UDOH, 2003

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